

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR VE

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON CONTACTS PROGRAM OF FOREIGN
MINISTER ESCOVAR

1. AS EMBASSY REPORTING INDICATED, FONMIN ESCOVAR ARRIVED
WASHINGTON FOR OASGA WITH ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVE OF PROJECT-
ING POSITIVE IMAGE OF VENEZUELA IN US PUBLIC MEDIA AND
WITH SELECTED MEMBERS US CONGRESS.

2. WITH RESPECT TO PUBLIC MEDIA, DEPARTMENT FURNISHED
APPROPRIATE FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE. THE INITIALLY OVER-
AMBITIOUS PROGRAM WAS SCALED DOWN BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT,
AND SOME APPOINTMENTS FELL THROUGH BECAUSE OF OASGA,
AND OTHER COMPETING DEMANDS ON FOREIGN MINISTER'S TIME.
PRESS CONFERENCE WAS HELD AT THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB,
THE WIRE SERVICES WERE SPARSELY REPRESENTED AT A USIA
FILM INTERVIEW OF ESCOVAR FOLLOWING HIS BREAKFAST WITH
THE SECRETARY, AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WAS GIVEN DAVID
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BINDER OF THE NEW YORK TIMES, AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER

APPEARED ON "OVERSEAS MISSION", A COMMERCIAL/EDUCATIONAL RADIO/TV SHOW BROADCAST BY 171 U.S. RADIO STATIONS AND CARRIED ON TV IN OVER FIFTY CITIES. WITH RESPECT TO N.Y. TIMES INTERVIEW, WE HAVE ENCOURAGED BINDER TO DO A STORY DESPITE THIN MATERIAL AND COMPETING NEWS EVENTS.

BINDER OBSERVED ESCOVAR MISSED OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE STORY POTENTIAL BY DUCKING QUESTION OF HIS VIEWS ON SECRETARY KISSINGER'S SPEECH ON STRENGTHENING THE WORLD ECONOMIC STRUCTURE. (HE SAID HE HAD TO CHECK WITH HIS GOVERNMENT). FOLLOW-UP SEVERAL DAYS LATER BY BINDER HAD SAME RESULT. IN ANY EVENT, BINDER WILL GIVE IT A TRY BUT IS NOT OPTIMISTIC PAPER WILL CARRY STORY. RADIO/TV INTERVIEW IS BEING FORWARDED FOR POSSIBLE USE IN CARACAS.

3. USIA ALSO INTERVIEWED AND PROVIDED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF ESCOVAR'S ACTIVITIES. RESULTING STORIES FILED TO CARACAS AND ELSEWHERE ALONG WITH VIDEO AND FILM MATERIAL.

4. WITH RESPECT TO CONGRESSIONAL CONTACTS, DEPARTMENT ASSISTED IN ARRANGING APPOINTMENTS WITH SENATORS MCGEE, HUMPHREY, BROCK AND CHILES AND WITH CONGRESSMAN FASCELL. ONLY BROCK AND CHILES APPOINTMENTS COULD BE KEPT; OTHERS WERE CANCELLED BECAUSE OF CONFLICTS IN FONMIN'S SCHEDULE. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING HE ALSO HAD AT LEAST CURSORY ENCOUNTERS WITH SENATORS BENTSEN AND KENNEDY.

5. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY AND OTHER DEPARTMENT OFFICERS, FONMIN ESCOVAR HAS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OPPORTUNITIES AND ASSISTANCE AFFORDED HIM. WE BELIEVE NET IMPACT HAS BEEN QUITE POSITIVE. INGERSOLL

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